

North Carolina

Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

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<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Program Manager Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Amelia Lance</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services 2409 Mail Service Center Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2409</p> <p>E-MAIL: Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 919.733.2580</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Esther High</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services 2409 Mail Service Center Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2409</p> <p>E-MAIL: Esther.High@ncmail.net</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 919.733.9464</p>
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Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in North Carolina is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Social Services (DSS). DHHS and adoption links: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/index.htm, www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/c_srv/cserv_adopt.htm and www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/adopt/aboutadoption.html.

- 1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? ("What is your state definition of special needs?")**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Age
- Member of a minority or ethnic group
- Member of a sibling group to be placed together
- Known and diagnosed medical, mental, or emotional conditions that will require periodic treatment or therapy of a medical or remedial nature
- Need for placement with a known and approved family

Note: Children must be legally free for adoption and in the placement responsibility of a North Carolina agency authorized to place children to be eligible for adoption assistance. Placement responsibility must currently be with that of a North Carolina agency authorized to place children for adoption, or have been at the time of the filing of the adoption petition, or with an agency that subsequently placed the child in the custody of a person now pursuing adoption of that child.

- 2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above, in the placement responsibility of a North Carolina agency authorized to place children, and legally free for adoption.

- 3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$2,000.00 per child

- 4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

North Carolina offers deferred adoption assistance.

- 5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?**

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in North Carolina after adoption finalization.

6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

Adoption assistance agreements include the state mandated cash payment rate based on the age of the child and no adjustment can be made to the State standardized rates. Adoptive parents are directed to contact their local Department of Health and Human Services to request a change in an adoption assistance agreement. County directory link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/cty_cnr/dir.htm.

Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services

7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post adoption services in North Carolina are administered through the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services and private and family organizations. Post adoption services include the following examples:

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| 1. Information and referral | 2. Support groups |
| 3. Advocacy | 4. Respite |

Local departments of social services and four contract private adoption agencies provide post adoption services. Not all services are available in all counties. Contact the department of social services in the county of residency or State Post Adoption Services Contact for availability and access or Amelia Lance, e-mail: amelia.lance@ncmail.net. County directory link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/local/. Many private organizations offer a variety of respite options. See North Carolina's Respite Programs, link: <http://www.respitelocator.org/n6states.htm>.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance

8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Mental health services for children in North Carolina are administered by the DHHS Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) and include the following examples: inpatient and outpatient hospitalization, including treatment in psychiatric hospitals and mental health centers, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse programs, diagnostic services, therapies, physician's services and prescription drugs. Mental health services may require prior approval before services can be received.

North Carolina's general Medicaid link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/consinfo.htm and Frequently Asked Questions on the Family and Children's Medicaid link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/fcfaqs.htm.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Special needs children with chronic mental or physical conditions or illness may receive services in addition to those covered under North Carolina's Medicaid plan if services are medically necessary and receive precertification under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment program (EPSDT). Contact your Medicaid caseworker for more details on EPSDT.

North Carolina also has vendor payment for medical and therapeutic services, *HIV Supplemental Payments*, and *Supplemental Special Children Adoption Incentive Fund* for child with severe medical and rehabilitative needs. *Supplemental Special Children Adoption Incentive Fund* is limited to county participation and is therefore not available to all children.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings

10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

Adoptive parents have the right to appeal a decision any time adoption assistance benefits have been denied, reduced, or terminated. Requests for a fair hearing or appeal of a decision must be made in writing to the local department of social services. Within five days of receiving notification of the request, the county department of social services must notify the parents that a hearing will be held and hold the hearing. A local hearing officer will review the case and render a decision. If the decision is unfavorable to the parents, the agency will advise parents that they can appeal to the state. Parents have fifteen days of the mailing of the agency's letter to request a State appeal. If parents wish to appeal the agency's decision, the agency will submit required materials to the State Hearings and Appeals Section. The Hearing Officer will make arrangements with the parents and agency for the date and time of the hearing. Following the hearing, the Hearing Officer will notify the parents of the decision. If parents are dissatisfied with the decision, their appeal for review can be submitted to the Chief of the Hearings and Appeals Section. If the final decision of the Hearing and Appeals Section is unfavorable to the parents, they can then appeal to North Carolina's Superior Court, provided such appeal is filed within thirty days of the receipt of the final decision. Contact the local county office, directory link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/cty_cnr/dir.htm.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

North Carolina's general adoption link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/adopt/

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

North Carolina's adoption assistance link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/c_srv/cserv_adopt.htm. See the third and fourth paragraphs for details.

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

North Carolina's state-specific medical assistance link: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/consinfo.htm